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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: TAIWAN'S NATIONAL SECURITY REPORT,
U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their coverage May 20-22 on President Chen Shui-bian's apology for the First Family's involvement in the recent insider trading scandal; alleged involvement by Chen's son-in-law in the snowballing insider trading scandal; Taiwan's first National Security Report; the DPP's internal feud; the island's bid to join the WHO; and the year-end Taipei and Kaohsiung mayoral races. In addition, almost all papers carried on inside pages AIT Director Stephen Young's first press conference with the Taiwan media last Friday.

The pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan's biggest daily, ran a banner headline on page two May 22 that said "To Set up a Cross-Strait Anti-Bird Flu Hotline, [Taiwan Health Minister] Hou Sheng-mou Invites His Chinese Counterpart to Talks." The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" ran a banner-headline news story on page four May 22 that read "[Defense Ministry] May Likely Withdraw [U.S.] Arms Procurement Bill and Include It in [Ministry's] Annual Regular Budget for Next Year."

12. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the pro-status quo "China Times" called the National Security Report insignificant, as the government has failed to specify its strategic thinking and the measures it will adopt to cope with the challenges facing Taiwan. A "United Daily News" analysis also described the report as a patchwork that has been revised many times without coming to the point. An editorial in the limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" said there is nothing new in the report, whereas the many promises listed inside are unenforceable. "Taiwan Daily" Washington correspondent James Wang, on the other hand, criticized Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick's recent remarks in a congressional hearing. Wang said Zoellick has made some serious, inappropriate remarks, as he took China's position as the United States' position in terms of cross-Strait relations. An opinion piece in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" said Taiwan-U.S. ties are strong enough to survive the recent spat over Chen's transit. End summary.

13. Taiwan's National Security Report

A) "How Can a National Security Report Be Binding If It Has No Influence at All?"

The pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (5/22):

"... A genuinely significant National Security Report that deserves everyone's attention is not something that [the government will] use to teach its people a lesson in international relations or frighten its people about how fierce Beijing is. Instead, the report should

clearly tell its people what the government's strategic thinking is with regard to coping with the relevant challenges, and what the government's measures are to cope with them. Also, it should clearly explain to its people why the measures the government proposed are effective and can solve the problems [facing Taiwan]. Unfortunately, this is exactly the part in the entire National Security Report that 'shows nothing new at all.' When it talks about 'building high-quality, proper-quantity national defense capabilities,' ... to 'promote flexible diversified diplomacy,' to 'strengthen an economy of sustainable development and competitive edge,' or to 'rebuild social relations,' these are all policy objectives, rather than viable strategies. Even if they were policy objectives that the ruling authorities believe they should implement, why didn't they do that in the past six years? Isn't it already too late, now that it occurred to the government that it should rebuild social relations and make the island's economy competitive and diplomacy more flexible, when there are only two years remaining in its term? Do they really want to promote these policies in a hurry in two years? If the government is already pushing these policies, how can it explain the so many problems facing Taiwan now? ..."

B) "A Quilt That Has Been Patched Numerous Times"

Journalist Huang Ya-shih commented in a news analysis in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (5/21):

"... AIT Taipei Director Stephen Young recently welcomed [Taiwan's] National Security Report and emphasized that it was made from 'Taiwan's perspective.' But Young also admitted that he had exchanged views [on the report] with his 'good schoolmate' Chiou I-jen many times and that Chiou must be very happy, now that the long-awaited report has finally come out. What Young implied seemed to mean that Taiwan has revised its report repeatedly and it finally 'passed the interview.'

"When reading into the report, it does look like a 'big quilt' that has been revised numerous times, bearing with it 'the U.S. shadow,'

the 'theory of China's threats' to please the pro-independence faction, and the 'pie of cross-Strait exchanges' that is used to deal with those who advocate [cross-Strait] opening. But each idea proposed in the report seemed to merely touch upon the issue without really coming to the point. Perhaps for the Bian administration, it is better now to remain pointless than to bring about extra complications, both internally and externally."

C) "A 'National Security Report'"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (5/22):

"... It's a non-report, if you allow us to coin that word. It doesn't tell anything we don't know about Taiwan's national security. It doesn't propose anything that can be done under the existing circumstances. ... Though it's a non-report, the bulky document can be considered a political party platform. It seems President Chen is laying down the Democratic Progressive Party platform long before a candidate is to be nominated next year, albeit he himself cannot run for a third term. As the party platform goes, his National Security Report is full of promises, which, of course, are by and large breakable. ..."

14. U.S.-Taiwan Relations

A) "Which Country's Deputy Secretary of State is Zoellick?"

Washington correspondent James Wang noted in the "Washington Review" column of the pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 100,000] (5/20):

"... In response to some American congressmen's criticisms of the State Department's tactless mistreatment of President Chen Shui-bian's transit, Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick made a few inappropriate remarks that did not suit his position at all: Taiwan is an 'economy,' 'Taiwan independence means war,' and that Taiwan will keep running into a wall if it keeps bumping up against the United States' long-lasting 'one China' policy. As the U.S.

deputy secretary of state, Zoellick's statements went beyond President George W. Bush's position, and he took China's position to be the United States' position. For a diplomat, Zoellick has made some serious, improper remarks. ...

"Taiwan wants to bump up against the United States' 'one China' policy because ... doing so is in Taiwan's interest and this is something Taiwan should do. Washington fails to review new situational developments and fails to kindly respond to Taiwan's expectations. Instead, Zoellick even put on a hegemonic face, denounced Taiwan not to bump against the U.S. policy, and echoed China by saying 'Taiwan independence means war.' [Zoellick's] hypocrisy and arrogance make people doubt the United States' sincerity in advocating democracy and freedom."

B) "Taiwan-US Ties Strong Enough to Survive Spat"

Huang Tien-lin, national policy adviser to the president, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (5/20):

"... Are Taiwan-US relations really so fragile that the US would abolish the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) because of a simple spat over Chen's transits? If they were, the two would have severed relations long ago... But money can achieve anything. China is not only expanding its economic interests into the US, but also building its dominance in Southeast Asia. The difficulties of Chen's transit were a direct result of China's economic and military expansion. Hence, I would like to advise those Taiwanese lawmakers who warn that the US may abolish the TRA that if you are really worried about Taiwan's future, you should stop pushing proposals in the Legislative Yuan that promote cross-strait economic integration and trade."

YOUNG